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The Purpose of Domesday Book: a Quandary

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In 1086 the Normans made a survey of the English kingdom. Domesday Book, an abbreviation of the results of that survey, survives and constitutes the single greatest source for eleventh-century England. Indeed, it gives scholars a more detailed picture of the countryside and its inhabitants than is available for any other kingdom in the period, and generations of English historians have mined its folios on all manner of subjects. These efforts began before antiquarianism and have continued through all the stages of modem historical scholarship.[1] Without Domesday, we would hardly see the English countryside except for a few snapshots. Domesday has also incited wonder as a written record, and scholars have tried to determine how it was made. Comparatively little effort, however, has been expended on the fundamental question of why it was made. A correct answer to the question is essential for two reasons. First, one can only suppose that the purpose informed the text, and scholars theoretically run the risk of misunderstanding the text if their ideas about the purpose of the survey are incorrect. Second, until its purpose is clear, Domesday will never find its proper place in the history of William the Conqueror's reign. These are very broad subjects, of course; and my aim in this paper is to sketch the two principal theories about the purpose of Domesday and to discuss their weaknesses in the light of recent research.

Since the structure of Domesday, its contents, and its significant omissions play a major role in all attempts to explain the survey, our inquiry must begin with these matters-the "given" of Domesday studies.[2] No doubt at all surrounds the beginning of the project. William the Conqueror ordered the inquest at his Christmas court in 1085. According to the conventional chronology, the commissioners entrusted with the survey completed their task by August of 1086 when they presented the results to William at Salisbury. The speed of the proceedings is amazing given the scale of the survey: it covered the whole kingdom except for the northern most shires. In part, the Normans used the existing administrative structure of the kingdom as a framework for the undertaking: The kingdom was divided into shires, and each chapter in Domesday describes a shire. Inside shires on the other hand, Domesday abandons a geographical approach. Shires were subdivided into smaller units called hundreds, each composed some set number of villages. Rather than using these units as sections and subsections of its description, Domesday switches to a

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tenurial focus inside shires. Below the level of the shire, the land of each landholder becomes the unit of description, and Domesday gives an account o these units or honors manor by manor even though the manors might be located in different hundreds.

Domesday is basically a gigantic list of manors, each with a name. For an eleventh-century government to know the names of all the manors in the kingdom is itself an implausible accomplishment, but Domesday goes on to provide an amazing amount of information about the manors. Each account names the baron who held the manor, his subtenant, if any, and the holder in 1086. The tax assessment appears expressed in hides (the hide was a fiscal unit composed of 120 acres). The number of plowlands (a mysterious land measure) follows and the number of actual plow teams. Domesday also counts the peasants (adult males) by status. Miscellaneous economic information brings up the rear. Domesday enumerates mills. It attempts to measure pasture, meadow, and woods. It calculates worth: entries typically conclude with the value of the manor in 1066 and 1086. One can also tell from the East Anglian folios that the commissioners collected census data on livestock although this information was left out of the final draft for the rest of the kingdom. Finally, Domesday provides short accounts of the boroughs.

Although much of this information is highly stereotyped, its detail, range, and regularity is amazing given the date, and these very qualities make it hard to explain Domesday. Why would an eleventh-century king want this information? Domesday provides no answer-the survey does not explain itself. The terms of reference for the commissioners (the instructions they received as we have them) list the questions to be asked. The early notices of the inquest in the chronicles merely list its contents.3 Scholars cannot explain it by comparing it to other similar surveys because none exist. In other words, no explicit evidence bears on the purpose of Domesday. Any explanation, therefore, must be a hypothesis. Two types of theories are possible-those based on the perceived political situation in 1085-86 or those based on the arrangement of the text or the information therein. One might anticipate in these circumstances that scholars would have provided a rich selection of theories, but that is not the case. Most students of Domesday have always been concerned with using the text rather than explaining it, and, if one ignores simple assertions on the matter at issue, only two major theories exist.4

The first serious explanation of Domesday was the work of a late Victorian scholar, John Horace Round. In 1895 Round argued that Domesday was the direct result of a geld inquest. The geld was the great land tax that the Anglo-Saxons had invented to raise protection money for the Danes. Round's case was based on a theory on how Domesday was made. He posited that the Normans had used the old hundredal framework to collect the required information from the villages. His evidence for this procedure was an early draft of Domesday for Cambridgeshire, a "satellite" in the parlance of Domesday studies. This text described the villages in Cambridgeshire hundred by hundred so that manors located in the same village appeared together even if they had different lords. The original returns of Domesday were, then, a great series of a hundred rolls.

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Round further assumed that the royal clerks later rearranged this geographically structured information on an honorial format to produce the Domesday text we know.5

This argument was brilliant. His reconstruction of how the survey was made was consistent with the differences between his satellite and Domesday, and his conclusion about the purpose of Domesday seemed obvious. Hundreds were responsible for the collection of the geld from the villages within their bounds. If the clerks used the hundredal framework to conduct the inquest, the object must have been fiscal. Scholars were particularly ready to believe this conclusion because they were at this time uncovering the elegant assessment system based on artificially arranged groups of hides that lay upon the countryside. In any case, it was difficult to see any other purpose for the inquest. The barons had already had their honors for years so Domesday clearly was not connected with the distribution of estates. A feudal purpose was also inconceivable because the survey did not mention feudal obligations.

Round's theory that Domesday was a geld book was further elaborated by his greater contemporary, Frederic William Maitland. Round's explanation of the text rested on a picture of how it was made; Maitland's was based on its contents. Maitland wanted to use the information in the text to reconstruct the outlines of Anglo-Saxon society, and to do this he needed to understand why so many different types of information were present. His answer was radical: everything in Domesday was connected with the geld. The manor was the unit of description because in Domesday a "manor" was a house against which the geld was charged rather than a certain type of agrarian unit. Hides, of course, gave the tax assessment. Domesday enumerated peasants by status because free peasants were responsible for paying their own geld and the manorial lord pa for the less free. The clerks collected the different types of economic data because it was the basis for deciding a manor's tax liability. Even the boroughs fit into the scheme. They were fortresses rather than true towns in this period, and the manors within a shire subsidized the existence of the local borough according to their hides.6 This formulation was elegant. It unified the seemingly heterogeneous types of information in Domesday and, in so doing, explained why the commissioners asked the questions they did.

Maitland's explanation of Domesday may have been the most comprehensive ever attempted, but it was not a complete success. His definitions of the manor and the borough flew in the face of the common sense meaning of both terms and soon fell before criticism.7 The theory Domesday was a geld book, however, lasted for decades. It seemed to explain the survey; and, shorn of Maitland's textually based definitions, which had threatened scholars' understanding of two basic eleventh-century institutions, it raised no barriers to interpreting the data in a straightforward fashion. Indeed, the geld hypothesis survived down to the rise of administrative history. Starting in the 1940's, V.H. Galbraith destroyed the old theory with two main points. First, no one could have used Domesday as a guide for collecting the geld because it listed manors according to their lord rather than location. The force of this objection came from the few surviving geld rolls which surveyed the villages within hundreds

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seriatim While looking at these records, one can easily imagine oneself following around the collectors of the geld from village to village. Using Domesday as a guide, a collector might have had to retrace his steps two or three times in the case of divided villages. Second, Galbraith asserted that by the Norman period the geld did not bring in enough money to warrant the effort o making Domesday.8 These common sense points were devastating.

Galbraith later went on to replace Round's picture of how Domesday was made with a much more sophisticated theory. Simply put, Round's hundredal stage of the inquest was a myth. Domesday was not the product of inquests I each hundred; it owed little to the old order. Rather, the commissioners used the new feudal framework to gather data from the beginning. Galbraith's evidence for this new theory was a satellite survey (Exon Domesday) in which the information was arranged on an honorial basis (manors were grouped together by lord). He posited that the commissioners gathered much of their information directly from the barons in each shire, checked it in the shire court, and then combined these shire accounts in an ascending hierarchy of drafts that culminated in Domesday. The purpose of the inquest was implicit in its feudal structure: William wanted an account of each honor so that he could exercise his rights as feudal overlord. Detailed information about the honors would allow the king to collect the various charges and profits that were his due.9 Domesday was a feudal register. Its utility lay in feudal administration.

This answer looked like real progress, and it quickly won acceptance. At one and the same time Galbraith's theory seemed to answer all questions and to force anyone who disagreed to do battle on the grounds of the endless minutia on which Galbraith had built his case. His hypothesis, in fact, had weaknesses,10 but a real alternative did not appear until Sally Harvey's attempt to revive the geld hypothesis in the 1970's. Like Maitland, her theory depends on an interpretation of the contents of Domesday. What prompted the inquest in her view was a fall in the receipts of the geld (the barons had been lowering their assessments). The principal purpose of the inquest was to provide the basis of a reassessment. This conclusion is reminiscent of the Victorians, but a startling novelty follows. William proposed to raise the geld by introducing a new cadastral unit-the fiscal plowland rather than by multiplying hides. Harvey believes that the plowland was a new fiscal unit analogous to the late Roman yoke (a Late Antique fiscal unit that measured the fiscal capacity of all types of productive land in units of equal value). Needless to say, no explicit evidence supports this theory. Rather, its strength lies in its ability to explain why earlier scholars came to different conclusions about the nature of the plowland. The nature of this unit in fact varied by area. In some regions it was based on the number of teams; in others, on the number of hides; and in others, on nonarable sources of wealth.11 This explanation is highly ingenious. Unfortunately, believing it entails a number of difficulties. The most important is the fact that the hide remained the basis for the assessment of the geld.12

Indeed, the principal immediate result of Harvey's theory has been to provoke a rebuttal from J. C. Holt who modernized Galbraith by giving the inquest a political context. According to Holt, William wanted the information

in the survey for Galbraith's reasons-in the long run. More immediately, he wanted the baron's homage. They provided both because they wanted tide to their lands, which Domesday could provide. This deal was consummated at Salisbury in 1086 when William received the written returns of the inquest, and the barons swore homage.13 This proposed political context would represent real progress. Unfortunately, William's motivation depends on the implausible assumption that the barons had not done homage before 1087.

These are the major theories that seek to account for Domesday. Their weaknesses show how difficult the task is. Domesday is so out of step with our picture of Norman government that we probably would not believe in it if it had not survived. Indeed, Ingulf's statement that King Alfred had a survey like Domesday is a powerful reason for believing his chronicle is a forgery.14 An eleventh-century government should not have wanted to make such a detailed survey. M.T. Clanchy has even asserted that the project was based on a mistaken idea of how to use written information. Holt held that the economic data in Domesday was simply too bulky for an eleventh-century government to use except in the piecemeal fashion that Galbraith proposed. Richardson and Sayles saw it as a "vast administrative mistake" that was of no use and had become a "historical monument" by the early twelfth century. Since Domesday does exist, yet fails to explain itself,15 scholars can only provide a rationale based on their contemporary understanding of government in the period. The Victorians looked to the geld. Their successors emphasized the administrative utility of the data in a feudal context. Contemporaries embroider these two basic alternatives.

Paradoxically, these explanations have one important similarity: they make little difference. If Domesday turned out to be a forgery produced by a demented census taker with an antiquarian bent and historians had to delete its evidence from the textbooks, our picture of the English countryside would vanish. Accounts of the reign of William the Conqueror would loose only a paragraph or two, and these would mostly consist of description. To put the point slightly differently, in most accounts William makes Domesday and nothing commensurate with the effort happens as a result.16 Scholarship on Domesday is virtually a self-contained world with few lessions that reach beyond its borders. We see this effect because the explanations are deductive; and, not surprisingly, they cannot serve as the foundation for the expansion of our knowledge of the Conqueror's reign or his government.

Perhaps no escape from this impasse exists. On the other hand, the methodology may be at fault. Historians seek to provide Domesday with a rationale on the basis of our fragmentary knowledge of William I's government when Domesday dwarfs the evidentiary basis of this knowledge. If the explanation must be deductive, it should at least be drawn from the text of Domesday in large measure. Yet such an approach has been out of favor since Maitland's time for the most part. The text is uncooperative; and the method, as Maitland showed, can lead to unsettling conclusions. Several scholars, however, have used this approach on particular subjects, and their results raise serious doubts about the current explanations of Domesday.

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For example, how developed was the treasury? Some historians assume that the geld presupposed at least a simple treasury that functioned as a repository. Others can find no real evidence for such an institution before the time of Rufus.17 No real grounds for doubt exist, however. In 1971 Harvey published an excellent article on how Domesday was made. In this piece she demonstrated that some of the information in Domesday must have been derived from existing survey information. The names of the manors, their tax assessments, and the names of their holders in 1066 must all have been available to the Domesday commissioners before they began their work. The evidence for this theory consisted of several pre-Domesday surveys which scholars had confounded with Domesday satellites (surveys that were a by-product of the inquest). Harvey was able to uncover the true nature of a number of such surveys, and she concluded on their evidence that Domesday stood at the end of a series of surveys that identified place, holder, and hides and stretched back into Anglo-Saxon times.18 Although some of her evidence has been questioned, her conclusion is certainly correct, and it has significant implications.19 If the Anglo-Saxons were regularly making surveys of the countryside, their administrative sophistication was considerably greater than has been thought. Furthermore, if the commissioners got the core of the information in Domesday-the framework of place and holder-from an older survey, then the job they were faced with shrank considerably. They had only to bring the name of the holder up-to-date a'nd to add the economic data.20

Even though Harvey's conclusions on this matter have won extensive acceptance, scholars have been oddly slow to think through their implications. The treasury not only existed, it must have been considerably more than a repository. Regular survey making presupposes records and a clerical staff, and Domesday points to the same conclusion. The survey notes disputes over a *holder's right to particular manors fairly* often. These notices are severely compressed, but as a group they provide a clear picture of how the Normans-at least in theory-were put in possession of their manors. The hoary generalization is that particular Non-nans received the land of particular dispossessed AngloSaxons through antecessor grants. This procedure seemed likely because of its simplicity. In fact, recent research establishes that this was only one of several ways that the Normans got their lands, but it is the mechanics of the process rather than the principles behind it that are important in this context.21

The installation of the new Non-nan landholders was the result of a formal process. Land transfers took place in the shire court. The arrival of a royal writ brought by a representative of the king, a deliverer, initiated the process. The best transfers were by writ and deliverer. One knows this from the fact that landholders involved in a dispute will base their claim to a properly on the fact that such a procedure had taken place, or the court may record that it had never seen a writ or deliverer for the manor in dispute.

No real doubt can exist about the use of this procedure. Hundreds of entries in eastern England attest to its use. E.A. Freeman noted its existence long ago, and R. Welldon Finn has provided a detailed modern discussion.22 Yet again, however, no general appreciation of what this procedure implies has appeared-perhaps because these scholars did their work before Harvey's seminal article. Installation by writ establishes that the king had a list of the manors in the kingdom complete with the name of the last Anglo-Saxon holder before Domesday because otherwise William could not have used this method of installation. This list described even minute properties. In eastern England examples appear of properties measured in virgates (30 acres) being transferred by writ.23 Finally, the use of this method must have entailed the production of a very large number of writs after the Conquest. To take the case of Bedfordshire, a relatively small shire, the installation of the barons would have required, at a minimum, 42 writs covering 288 manors if each writ named all the manors of one of the newcomers in the shire. If a baron received multiple writs, the number would rise substantially.24 Indeed, the Norman Conquest may have been nearly as big a disaster for sheep as for Anglo-Saxons.

Harvey's conclusions were, then, conservative. The government of the late Anglo-Saxon kings made territorial surveys of hides. Land transfers routinely depended on documents. The shire courts must also have kept records of the writs that appeared. How else can one explain the suitors' ability to remember--or not to remember--seeing a writ relating to a particular property in the avalanche of writs let loose by the Norman Conquest?25 Domesday was not the work of a government that only sporadically resorted to written records and casually pressed into service a compliant clerk for the job. The AngloSaxons bequeathed to the Normans a sophisticated tradition of making and using surveys. The central core of information in Domesday was undoubtedly gathered from existing records, and this theory greatly reduces the amount of work that the Normans faced in making the survey. The clerks had only to rearrange the manors into groups based on holder-probably through interlineation on an old survey-and then to add the new information.26

This formulation seems to clarify the novelty of Domesday. In Harvey's opinion Domesday differed from its predecessors because it juxtaposed a list of manors with the economic information. If this theory is correct, the question that must be answered is why the commissioners combined these two sorts of information. Given the conventional picture of the early Norman polity, historians can only resort to the geld or feudal administration in Galbraith's sense for an explanation. Neither of these solutions is entirely satisfactory in the current state of our knowledge although the geld theory is the better of the two. The idea Domesday was connected with the geld is not preposterous and never has been. Galbraith's dictum that Domesday could never have served as a guide for collecting the geld ignored a fundamental uncertainty. All the surviving eleventh-century geld rolls come from before the date of Domesday or are contemporary with it. They show that the territorial hundred was the basis for collecting the tax. Historians assume that this system of collection continued, but the actual evidence bearing on this matter is sparse and contradictory.27 Conceivably, Domesday might have marked a transition from the hundred to the honor for the collection of the geld *within* shires. The geld was not as unimportant as Galbraith assumed. Judith Green has recently established that it

was still an important source of revenue under Henry 1. Earlier, it may well have been valuable enough to warrant the inquest. Furthermore, J.J.N. Palmer has brought forth convincing evidence from Domesday that, despite his critics, Maitland's old definition of a manor may have been correct after all. In Cambridieshire Domesday used the term in a consistent fashion as if it had a technical meaning, and groups of manors formed artificially arranged blocks of hides with decimal assessments that probably constituted units for the collection of the geld. Finally, such a theory would explain why contemporaries called Domesday a *descriptio-a* ten-n which meant an "assessment."28

The Victorian geld hypothesis has points in its favor, and the attractiveness of Galbraith's alternative declines upon inspection. As logical as the idea seems that the utility of Domesday lay in feudal administration, the idea is only a theory. No one has, in fact, demonstrated that the exchequer used Domesday's economic information to calculate the amount of relief a baron had to pay upon inheritance, to set the price for the marriage of a heiress, or to establish a farm for a barony. At most only a very small number of possible examples ever appear, and one is left to guess whether the paucity of examples is the result of the paucity of administrative evidence from before the beginning of the pipe rofls or a sign that Domesday was not used for this purpose.29

The rationale of Domesday might, then, have been connected with the fiscal system. One might theorize that the survey was to be the basis for restructuring it. Perhaps William intended to shift the basis for the collection of the geld from the hundred to the honor within shires. If so, the organization of information in Domesday mirrored the structure of the new fiscal framework, and honors had functions beyond the military and judicial roles normally attributed to them. The theory that early Norman honors were fiscal units is attractive. It might ultimately provide an escape from the conundrum of Domesday, yet several difficulties stand in the way of such a solution. First, pointing out the weakness in the theory that the geld was collected from hundreds after 1086 is easy; establishing how the geld was actually collected in this period is far more difficult. Second, one would still need to explain the presence of the economic information. Obviously, it might have been the basis for deciding how many hides a manor could bear. This possibility goes back to Maitland who posited that a manor worth £ 1 would typically bear an assessment of one hide.30 If the existence of such an assessment scheme could be established, the economic information in Domesday would lose all its mystery. However, even with Maitland's liberal allowances for the effects of beneficial hidation (the lowering of a manor's tax assessment as a favor), the proposed relationship has seemed elusive to his successors, and the most recent attempt to prove that it existed with quantitative methods is seriously flawed.31 Similarly, A.R. Bridbury's recent attempt to interpret Domesday as the result of an "income tax" investigation cannot be squared with the details of Domesday.32 Indeed, one can only conclude that the ability of a revived geld hypothesis to explain Domesday's interest in economical reality is problematical at best except on the level of

generalities. Both the geld and feudal administration as explanations seem to be similar in that they break down when one descends to details.

The difficulties with these explanations, of course, may only reflect imperfections in our current knowledge. They may, on the other hand, be a sign that historians have been very badly mistaken about Domesday. We might, for example, have misunderstood the chronological relationship between the survey and the Norman settlement. No one would ever have had any trouble explaining Domesday if it were part of the process of creating the Norman honors in England. Given the conventional chronology, however, a fifteen year time lag seems to stand between the Norman settlement and the date of the survey. Yet how closely is the Non-nan colonization of England dated? Historians assume that the barons got their lands in the late 1060's and early 1070's. The evidence for this theory is remarkably thin. No royal charter either bears witness to the process or dates it. The barons settled thousands of knights in England, but only two or three charters relating to this movement survive. The chronicles are somewhat more forthcoming. They provide the names of a number of important men, but the list is not extensive. It would consist of some very important Normans, royal confidants and a handful of earls, a few important barons, and several Norman sheriffs, usually found in hair-raising circumstances. No doubt, these important figures held manors in the countryside. No doubt they maintained military households. All that we actually know about subenfeoffment in this period comes from monasteries. This information shows a two stage process. Initially, the houses in question maintained bands of household knights. Later, they began to give these men estates. The date of the change is usually obscure, but at Peterborough it took place after *ca.* 1082.33 Historians normally assume that they *know* what happened and that these references represent only the tip of the iceberg, but do they?

Domesday certainly fails to suggest that large numbers of Normans had had their lands since the early 1070's or even the mid-1070's. Of course, the great survey contains little *direct* evidence about the timing of the Norman settlement, and what it does tell us about the tenurial situation before 1086 mostly comes from incidental information that accompanies disputes. These notices would add a few names to those recorded in the chronicles. On the other hand, Domesday's indirect evidence points to a fairly late settlement. If the barons had gotten their lands in the late 1060's and early 1070's, a number should have died before 1086. This is the case because the barons who led their knights during the Conquest were perforce all adults. A number must have been middle-aged, and a proportion of these men plus a group of unlucky younger men should have died before 1086. Of this composite group, several should have left behind heirs who were minors. The land of this subgroup should have been in the king's hands in 1086. However, if one looks for such land in Domesday, onp will look in vain for the most part. A few examples appear---enough to prove that Domesday knew how to describe this type of situation. The lands of Earl Aubrey were in William's possession in 1086. William had appointed him earl of Northumberland in the early 1080's. Aubrey had taken one look at his earldom

and gone home. Part of Roger of Poitou's land was in royal custody in Domesday. William was in the process of confiscating it. Besides these cases I know of one clear example of a dead baron in Domesday-Hugh fitz Grip, sometime sheriff of Devon. Hugh's wife held his land in 1086.34 This situation should not have existed if the bulk of the barons had received their lands early in the reign of William the Conqueror. Furthermore, the details of the known careers of William's barons leads to the same conclusion. Sander's *English Baronies*, which gives the succession of the known and probable baron discloses only three barons who died during William's reign (1066-1087), Hugh fitz Grip and two important men who loosely belonged to the group of settlers one could predict from the chronicles.35 Finally, the same phenomenon reappears among the barons' subtenants. Nearly all the subtenants were alive in 1086. One does not discover in Domesday examples of barons holding the land of deceased subtenants, and the absence of such cases is particularly significant given the large number of subtenants.

Why was no one dead in Domesday? The most likely explanation is that only a limited number of Normans had gotten their lands *ca.* 1070 and that the settlement had only intensified much later. In other words, most barons had not had a fair chance to die. This conclusion is supported by another characteristic of Domesday's picture of England in 1086. The tenurial hierarchy among the newcomers largely had only three levels-king, baron, and subtenant. Only a small number of subtenants had rear vassals holding from them. An impression of the small size of this group can be gained from the number of knights in Domesday, although the two groups do not overlap entirely. One count puts the number at about 500; a more recent one finds only 115.36 This state of affairs is also hard to explain if the Normans had had their lands for fifteen years. In that case one would expect to find a lush efflorescence of tenures.

Of course, objections to such a straight forward interpretation of what is not in Domesday are easy to formulate. Historians do not spend years in graduate school to purvey the obvious. Subtenants might appear immortal because the lands were not hereditary.37 When one died, his lord merely got another. Yet whatever the law, no one doubts that hereditary succession was normal, and this theory will not explain immortal barons. Oddly, the best objection to this theory comes from Domesday. It makes the barons alive in 1086 the heirs of Anglo-Saxons alive in 1066, and it mentions only a small number of intermediaries. As such long-lived Anglo-Saxons are even less plausible than immortal barons, both phenomena might be the result of the legal fiction that the barons were the heirs of the last generation of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. A simpler explanation is, however, more likely. The absence of Anglo-Saxon intermediaries between the named holder in 1066 and the Norman in possession in 1086 may only reflect the fact that the last survey that the Normans had related to Edward the Confessor's last years.

What can we conclude? Recent research has made enough progress along several lines to suggest that the received picture of Domesday contains serious flaws. The Normans undoubtedly got the general idea of making the survey from

Anglo-Saxon exemplars. The administrative capacity for making the inquest was also probably a legacy from the old regime. Whether the Normans' intention was traditional or new is a more difficult matter. A fiscal explanation of the survey would assimilate it to its Anglo-Saxon forebears. A feudal explanation would indicate that the Normans reworked a native administrative tradition to a new purpose.

Neither of these possibilities can be ruled out given the present state of our knowledge. Galbraith's hypothesis that Domesday's utility lay in feudal administration may be quite unproved, but a bom-again geld hypothesis has its own difficulties to overcome. Furthermore, if we have misdated the Norman settlement, the inquest might have had a very practical and immediate usefulness. This theory is attractive. Certainly historians have overlooked some very odd features of Domesday's description of the tenurial situation in 1086, but more evidence is desirable before we embrace such a radical readjustment of the chronology of the Norman settlement.

The deepest problem is that no one really knows what was in the AngloSaxon surveys. Harvey's reconstruction of their contents is based (inevitably) on second hand evidence. This reconstruction leads her to attribute what was new about Domesday to the Normans, but our knowledge of the state that produced Domesday's predecessors is highly limited. The point was underlined by James Campbell who offered a radical reappraisal of the late Anglo-Saxon state in a recent article. Campbell contends that the eleventh-century Old England polity was far more centralized than anyone has thought. It had a professional army and navy which the kings paid for with an extortionate tax flow maintained by cadres of minions that reached down to the village level.38 If this construct is correct, we must put the question of Domesday's purpose against a new background. The habit of collecting economic information may hardly have been a Norman innovation, and the uses such a state could have had for this kind of information becomes the real question. This, I think, is the principal goal that further Domesday studies should work towards.

Notes

1. See David Bates, *A Bibliography of Domesday Book* (Woodbridge and Dover, 1983). For an overview of the state of Domesday scholarship in general, consult William E. Kapelle, "Domesday Book: F.W. Maitland and his Successors," *Speculum*, 64 (1989), 629-40.

2. The most accessible text is the recent Phillimore edition: *Domesday Book*, ed. John Morris, 34 vols. (Chichester, 1975-86).

3. V.H. Galbraith, *The Making of Domesday Book* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 60-66; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Dorothy Whitelock, D.C. Douglas, and Susie I. Tucher (New Brunswick, 1961), pp. 161-62; Florence of Worcester, *Chronicon ex Chronicis*, ed. Benjamin Thorpe, 2 (London, 1844), 18-19; Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford, 1969-80), 2, 266-67; 4, 52-53. Elizabeth Hallam, *Domesday Through Nine Centuries* (London, 1986), pp. 20, 32-36.

4. My criteria for omitting certain explanations such as Stenton's which connected the inquest with the threatened Danish invasion is the absence of extensive argument in their defense, F.M. Stenton, *The First Century of English Feudalism, 1066-1166*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1961), pp. 149-50.

5. J.H. Round, *Feudal England: Historical Studies in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, repr. ed. (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 17-123. The satellite is

known as the *ICC: Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis, subjicitur Inquisitio Eliensis*, ed. N.E.S.A. Hamilton (London, 1886).
6. F.W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge and New York, 1987), pp. 5-6, 59-60, 66, 120, 172-89, 418-46, 463-89.
7. See James Tait's review in the *English Historical Review*, 12 (1897), 768-77.
8. Galbraith, *The Making of Domesday*, pp. 12-27, 42-43.
9. See *ibid.*, pp. 16, 29-44 for a concise statement of Galbraith's views. This theory rests on the detailed arguments in the following chapters.
10. To maintain his theory, Galbraith had to portray the *ICC* as an aberration and to minimize the significance of Peter Sawyer's discovery that in many shires manors in the same hundred tend to appear in the same order in Domesday's accounts of different barons' lands, *ibid.*, pp. 35, 63-64, 123-45, 162; P.H. Sawyer, "The 'Original Returns' and Domesday Book," *English Historical Review*, 70 (1955), 177-97; H.B. Clarke, "The Domesday Satellites," in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. Peter Sawyer (London, 1985), pp. 58-59, 62.
11. For the full-blown theory, see Sally P.J. Harvey, "Taxation and the Ploughland in Domesday Book," in *Domesday Book*, ed. Sawyer, pp. 86-103. For earlier recensions of the theory, see *eadem*, "Domesday Book and its Predecessors," *English Historical Review*, 86 (1971), 753-73; *eadem*, "Anglo-Norman Governance," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Ser, 25 (1975) 186-93; cf. *eadem*, "Taxation and the Economy," in *Domesday Studies*, ed. J.C. Holt (Woodbridge and Wolfeboro, 1987), pp. 249-64. For criticism see Kapelle, "Maitland," p. 634. On the plowland, J.S. Moore, "The Domesday Teamland: A Reconsideration" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Ser., 14 (1964), 109-30.

12. Judith A. Green, "The Last Century of Danegeld," *English Historical Review*, 96 (1981), 243.
13. J.C. Holt, "1086," in *Domesday Studies*, ed. *idem*, pp. 41-64. cf. Kapelle, "Maitland," p. 635.

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14. *Ingulf's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland*, trans. Henry T. Riley, repr ed. (Amsterdam, 1968), p. 160.
15. M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066-1307* (Cambridge Mass., 1979), pp. 18-20; Holt, "1086," p. 49; H.G. Richardson and G.O. Sayles, *The Governance of Medieval England from the Conquest to Magna Carta* (Edinburgh, 1963), pp. 28-29.
16. This lack of a result is one of the major difficulties that stand in the way of those who posit a fiscal purpose for Domesday, Holt, "1086," p. 64.
17. Majorie Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1166* (Oxford and New York, 1986), pp. 121-22; Frank Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England, 1042-1216*, 4th ed. (London and New York, 1988), pp. 44, 108; C.W. Hollister, "The Origins of the English Treasury," *English Historical Review*, 93 (1978), 262-75.
18. Harvey, "Domesday Book and its Predecessors," pp. 753-73; *eadem*, "Anglo- Norman Governance," pp. 175-81.
19. For criticism, see Clanchy, *Written Record*, pp. 15-16, 121; Clarke, "Domesday Satellites," p. 63 and n. 73. Harvey added to her evidence in "Anglo-Norman Governance," pp. 175-81.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 183-84; *eadem*, "Domesday Book and its Predecessors," pp. 772-73.
21. For the latest discussion on how the land transfer to the Normans was effected, see Robin Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England* (Cambridge and New York, 1991), pp. 145-214.
22. R. Welldon Finn, *The Norman Conquest and the Making of Domesday Book* (London and New York, 1961), pp. 100-102, cf. 16. For a more recent discussion and for Freeman's views, see James Campbell, "Some Agents and Agencies of the Late Anglo-Saxon State," in *Domesday Studies, ed.* Holt, p. 214.
23. I hope to go into this phenomenon in detail in the future. For some examples *see Domesday Book*, I, fols. 141d *bis*, 218b.
24. *Ibid.*, fols. 21 1 a- 18d.
25. *Ibid.*, fols. 36a, 36b, 62b, 218.
26. Clarke, "Domesday Satellites," p. 67.
27. For the date of the Conqueror's geld rolls, see Galbraith, *Domesday Book*, pp. 221-30; cf. Harvey, "Domesday Book and its Predecessors," pp. 768-69; R.R. Darlington, "Introducfion to the Wiltshire Geld Rolls," in A *History of Wiltshire*, ed. R.B. Pugh and Elizabeth Crittail, 2 (London, 1955), 174-76. The basis for the collection of the geld in the twelfth century is quite obscure. The fact that sheriffs accounted for the geld due from their shires might be taken to show that the hundred was still the unit for collection within shires, and a geld document arranged by hundreds does survive from Middlesex, "Hidagium Comitatus Totius Middlesexe," ed. T. Cl. Pinder, in *A History of the County of Middlesex*, ed. J. S. Cockburn, H.P.F. King and K.G.I. McDonnell, 1 (N.P., 1969), 135-38. On the other hand, a list from Herefordshire is arranged by landholder, *Herefordshire Domesday, circa*

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1160-70, ed. V.H. Galbraith and James Tait (London, 1947-48), pp. 77-8. The subject needs a modern investigation.
28. Green, "Danegeld," pp. 253-54; J.J.N. Palmer, "The Domesday Manor," in *Domesday Studies*, ed. Holt, pp. 139-53; R.H.C. Davis, "Domesday Book: Continental Parallels," in *Domesday Studies*, ed. Holt, p. 15.
29. See Harvey's "examples" in "Anglo-Norman Governance," pp. 184-85; for the best statement of the case, see Hallam, *Domesday Book*, pp. 37, 47-48. V.H. Galbraith, *Domesday Book: Its Place in Administrative History* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 100- III.
30. Maitland, *Domesday Book*, pp. 462-66, 470.
31. John McDonald and G.O. Snooks, *Domesday Economy: A New Approach to Anglo-Norman History* (Oxford, 1986); Kapelle, "Maitland," p. 638. R.A. Leaver, "Five Hides in Ten Counties," *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 41 (1988), 525-42.
32. A.R. Bridbury, "Domesday Book: A re-interpretation," *English Historical Review* 105 (1990), 284-309. 1 hope to show that this theory rests on an unsustainable definition of the plowland.
33. The chronology of the Norman settlement has not been a problem traditionally. See David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact Upon England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964), pp. 265-75; cf. John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 31-35. For

attempts to stretch out the settlement, consult William E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North: The Region and Its Transfornmation* (Chapel Hill, 1979), pp. 142-46, 193-200, and Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. 145- 82. Helena Chew, *The English Ecclesiastical Tenants-in-Chief and Knight Service* (Oxford, 1932), p. 144.

34. *Domesday*, 1, fols. 83c-84a (Hugh fitz Grip); 157c, 231c-d (Earl Aubrey); 89a, 269c-270b, 273c, 290a, 332a-b, 352a-c; 2, 242b-244b (Roger of Poitou).

35. Walter Giffard died in 1084; Walter of Lacy in 1084-85, I.J. Sanders, *English Baronies: A Study of Their Origin and Descent, 1086-132 7* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 62, 95.

36. Sally Harvey, "The Knight and the Knight's Fee in England," *Past and Present*, 49 (1970), 15; Clarke, "Domesday Satellites," p. 68. The two groups do not correspond exactly because some knights held directly from a baron.

37. J.C. Holt, "Politics and Property in Early Medieval England," *Past and Present*, 57 (1972), 3-52.

38. James Campbell, "Some Agents and Agencies of the Late Anglo-Saxon State," in *Domesday Studies*, ed. Holt, pp. 201-18.